

Providence Row – Helping homeless and vulnerable people since 1860

We are a homelessness charity tackling the root causes of homelessness to help people get off, and stay off, the streets. We have a vision of East London as a thriving, vibrant area which is a welcoming, friendly and multicultural place for people to visit and live in. When people do become homeless we will be a place they can go to for safety, help and support to address what has gone wrong.

East London remains one of the most deprived areas in the country, despite being situated next to the City of London which is home to some of the wealthiest corporations in the UK. Last year more than 1,800 people used our services. Working with people to build skills and confidence is the key to success. We do this through our trainee schemes, language classes and employment support. The support we provide for mental health and addiction issues helps people to rejoin the community. We also help people to return to their home communities and families, in the UK and abroad.

Thank for supporting us by attending tonight's recital.

<https://www.providencerow.org.uk/>

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Bach Cello Suites

Soloist: Adrian Ball

Thursday 16th September 2021

St. Mary Moorfields Church

In support of Providence Row

The Cello Suites are some of the greatest pieces of music ever written. Bach's genius is on clear display in the way he writes for the solo cello. Bach's ability to combine different voices or melodic lines is unmatched by any other composer. The cello is well suited for this display of counterpoint as the richness and depth in its lower range supports the sweet tenor voice of the higher register. The interplay between these different voices and textures on the cello is wonderfully showcased by Bach in these suites.

Three of the six suites will be performed: Suite no.1 in G major, Suite no.2 in D minor, and Suite no.3 in C major. Despite having rather different moods, the suites are almost identically structured with six movements – one prelude and five dances:

1. **Prelude** – this opening movement establishes the overall mood of the suite and explores the character of the key.
2. **Allemande** – this dance form was slightly altered by Bach in the Cello Suites but retains the basic medium-pace, four-beat rhythm.
3. **Courante** – literally meaning “running”, this is a leaping, three-beat dance at a faster tempo.
4. **Sarabande** – the slowest of the movements, this solemn dance stresses the second beat of three in the bar.
5. **Two minuets, or bourrées** in the third Suite – a pair of musically simple dances; the first in the pair is repeated after the second. Minuets have triple metre and are stately whereas the bourrées have two strong beats and are more folkish.
6. **Gigue** – the suites end with a lively folk dance (jig) based on compound rhythms i.e. three divisions within every beat. Each gigue has two sections.

The history

The historical background to these suites is murky, as with much of Bach's music. Composed around 1720, the autograph manuscripts are lost. One of the earliest known copies is in the hand of Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena. With ten children filling the Bach household, there is little surprise that there

are issues with Anna's copy. Other copies exist but they differ with regard to bowing which means the performer is given more freedom and responsibility in interpretation.

The Catalan cellist Pablo Casals brought the Suites into popularity in the 1930s with the music being only known to academics. The story of him rediscovering the works in an antique shop as a teenager is often exaggerated. Since then, many cellists have made recordings which can be very varied in style.

The instrument

Modern cellists are playing on an instrument with far greater power and projection than Bach would have known. Strings are no longer made of animal gut and bows are designed for maximum sustained sound. Bach's music requires a deftness which the modern cellist is not used to given the demands of the classical and romantic repertoire. Therefore, Adrian is playing on lower tension strings and a lower tuning to mimic gut strings without the need to deprive a goat of its vital organs. He is also doing his best using the more unwieldy modern bow...

The performer

Adrian Ball is a public servant by day and a musician by night. Adrian began making music aged six, starting with the cello. By the time he was at university studying Music at Churchill College, Cambridge, he had also picked up the double bass and classical singing. Having performed professionally in London and Cambridge, Adrian now enjoys being part of excellent amateur ensembles as the Principal Double Bass in the Bromley Symphony Orchestra and the Elgar Sinfonia. He has given many solo performances as a baritone; Vaughan-Williams' superb setting of George Herbert's Christian poetry from the Puritan era is a particular favourite – more for the Christ-exalting lyrics than the excellent musical setting. Adrian lives in South-East London with his wife and young daughter and attends Grace Church Greenwich.